

746 drastically through time, and we shall shortly see that the Chinese Communists are greatly altering the meaning and symbolism of those few which have been allowed to survive.

585 In addition to the annual festivals, the farmer's life of toil may be relieved by ceremonial family events. For a family with resources or the ability to borrow them, a wedding meant a great feast and ample wine; even the poorest families often went heavily into debt to make a marriage ceremony festive. Practical jokes were played on the bridegroom, traditional songs were sung, and the guests, particularly the men, thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The 584 births of male children were often celebrated as 862 were the betrothals, and other milestones of family and individual life. In modern times the 527 government of the Republic of China decreed certain national holidays, but these were little observed by the farm villages.

536 In addition to these occasions for relaxation, 538 intermittent special events added interest and variety to the routine of village life. Itinerant dramatic troupes occasionally performed, and until very recently, the story teller frequently appeared on the village streets to spin out his tales to an impromptu audience. The election 622 of a village headman often involved political maneuvering and a town meeting. Pilgrimages 788 to famous mountains or shrines were often undertaken in the slack agricultural season for religious reasons or purely for relaxation.

53 art criticism to keep writers and artists in line.

668 Now, however, the scope is national.

538 A. The All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles

In July 1949, before the establishment of the Central People's Government, writers and artists from various parts of China were "invited" to Peking where the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles was organized to co-ordinate the activities of a number of the nationwide organizations in specific cultural fields, such as literature, art, music, and the cinema; it was to follow the line laid down by Mao Tse-tung in 1942. Theoretically, the federation is not a government body, but it sent delegates to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in September 1949, as did Communist-sponsored political factions and mass organizations. The chairman and vice-chairman of the federation were given posts in the Communist government.

At the organizational meeting in July, Chou En-lai told the gathered writers and artists that they were the representatives of 70,000 literary and art workers in China, of which 30,000 were in the People's Liberation Army, another 30,000 scattered in the old Liberated Areas, and the remaining 10,000 were in areas recently liberated from the Kuomintang. From Chou's statement it is obvious that he identified as writers and artists Party propaganda personnel and those workers

538 engaged in raising the standard of literacy.²

It is doubtful that the majority of these 70,000 so-called writers and artists had achieved high competence in intellectual and artistic expression. Two years later, the Communists' leading woman author, Ting Ling, was still complaining that as editor she had difficulty in finding passable manuscripts for her magazine.³

It is certain that the organization of these writers and artists put the politically dubious under the guidance and supervision of the politically reliable; and the organized state rendered the writers and artists collectively responsible and accountable for their part in the Communist cause. Furthermore, dominated as it was by veteran Communists, the organization embracing all China's well-known writers and artists served as a good Communist-style democratic front.

2. Chou En-lai, "Political Report at the Conference of the All-China Literary and Art Workers," (July 6, 1949), People's Literature, Peking, 1, 3, Jan. 1, 1950, p. 17.

3. Ting Miao, A General Analysis of Chinese Communist Literature and Art, Hong Kong, Ya-chou ch'u-pan-she, 1954, pp. 149-50.

B. The Task of the Writers

538

The literary subdivision of the federation was the All-China Association of Literary Workers, which, like the federation's other subdivisions, has its own professional magazine, People's Literature. In the first issue, published in October 1949, the six-fold task of the magazine was stated in part as follows:

1. to participate in the People's Liberation War and in the construction of the "New Democratic nation" through literary forms that are treasured by the people, with ideological content reflecting the growth of the new nation and praising the contribution of the masses in revolutionary struggles and productive activities;
2. to rid literature of imperialist influence, and to reform traditional literature; to accept what is good in foreign literary and artistic endeavor;
3. to guide the masses in factories, villages, and in the ranks in their literary study, and to help increase their "literary strength;"
4. to develop literatures of the ethnic minorities;
5. to study revolutionary theory, and to organize groups for the study and discussion of the new literary productions and the formulation

- 53 of a "scientific" theory of literary criticism;

6. to promote interflow of literature and art among nations; to develop patriotism and internationalism; and to participate in the struggle for peace led by the USSR.⁴

Before the writers of the association had time to demonstrate their ability to implement these policies by fulfilling pledges to turn out so many pieces of work in a stipulated period of time, the conflict in Korea began.

The war was utilized by the Party as a schooling ground for class education and was depicted as a panorama of international class struggle. On this pretext writers were sent to the front to learn about "reality" in order to delineate the struggle of the hero of the day and to draw the moral of his time. They were expected to make the most of their experience, not only by reporting immediate events but also by recording their impressions in notes which would later serve as material for more lengthy literary works. With the exception of Pa Chin's Living Among the Heroes, Wei Wei's Who are the Most Lovable People? Lu Chu-kuo's Shang

4. People's Literature, I, 1, Oct. 25, 1949, p. 13. The content of this declaration reads very much like the constitution of the Union of the Soviet Writers in the USSR.

538 kan Mountain, Yang Shuo's Three Thousand-li Territory and a few others which are readable and maintain certain literary standards, other writings based upon the authors' experience on the Korean war front do not show maturity even in the handling of the Chinese language. However, the Chinese Communists claimed that these second-rate writings adequately expressed the Chinese Volunteers' patriotism and Communist internationalism.

In the Korean endeavor the Communists departed from one of their most boasted practices. Throughout the war against Japan and the "war of liberation" against the Kuomintang, Chinese soldiers were encouraged to write, and writings from the ranks were hailed and widely publicized. But professional writers were sent to Korea, probably to stimulate a more skillful literary dramatization of the Communist cause.

However, the Korean front was not the only place where writers were to learn about "reality" and to dramatize the "cause of the people." While the war was going on, Ai Wu, Ts'ao Yu, the noted playwright, and other writers were sent to factories; Ho Ching-chih, author of the celebrated The White-haired Girl, was sent to study life in the villages; Ting Hsi-lin, Liu Ch'ing, Li Tzu-hua, Mu Yeh, and a host of other veteran motion picture producers and directors were sent to Shanghai to partic-

538 ipate in the Three-Anti and Five-Anti campaigns.⁵

But these writers were not to record life as they observed it. Before they left for their "life schools," they had to undergo some "training." One can imagine the situation: writers of the calibre of Pa Chin and Ts'ao Yu learning from the speeches of Lu Ting-i and Ch'en Po-ta, the two propaganda chiefs of the regime, "how to describe people, how to abstract living reality and exercise care in collecting material, how to portray and praise, and above all, how to avoid making mistakes." It would appear that the Communists were so eager to prove the righteousness of their actions that they carefully arranged that "history" be recorded exactly in the way they wished it to seem.

Judging from the extent to which the land reform turned the rural social and political order upside-down, the Three-Anti and Five-Anti campaigns destroyed the bourgeois stronghold in the national economy, and the way in which the war in Korea affected the national life, one might expect that those writers who had been given the opportunity to witness these momentous events would accomplish literary feats of equal magnitude. On the contrary, one finds, with only rare exceptions, "formula"

5. See the chapter on Subversive Potentialities in this handbook for the content and impact of the campaigns.

- 538 stories which have all the correct political ingredients demanded of them but which lack originality and attempt at characterization. One story of land reform reads much like another, the only difference being the names given the heroes and some few idiosyncracies of the writers in the use of colloquial expressions and political jargon. The necessary adherence to the prescribed political formula has blighted creativeness.

C. Literary Criticism

What has contributed most to this fear of originality in literature is the influence of officially organized and directed literary criticism, which uses Communist literary theories to coerce and browbeat the writers. The disparity in the respect given critical and creative forces has stunted the young Communist literature and precluded a normal growth.

Outstanding instances of the enervating affect of Communist criticism are the reviews of the play, "The Song of the Red Flags," and the Story, "Old Worker Ku Fu-shan." The play, concerning shock-teams in a production drive, was initially praised by the Communists themselves; later, it was criticized because "it did not give a strong portrayal of the trade union and the party." According to the critics, the author should have used the play to strengthen the prestige of the trade union among the worker-

538 audiences as well as to emphasize the "human" qualities of the leading protagonist, a Communist cadre. The portrayal of the Party leader P'eng Kang in the play was deemed incorrect, "for the Party's leadership is invariably collective; but in the play, P'eng seems to be quite alone." The play was thus rated "of low educational value." The author of the story, "Old Worker Ku Fu-shan," was reprimanded because he "not only distorts the image of a model Party member but also completely ignores the function of Party training and leadership."

546 The classic example of Communist literary and artistic criticism involves the 1933 Shanghai-produced film, "Wu Hsien Chuan," based on the life story of a famous advocate of free education who lived in Shanghai Province. Wu Hsien was born into a poor family and was thus deprived of formal education. In order to help children to attend schools, he dedicated himself to hard work and frugal living, and to shrewd investment of his earnings. He succeeded in accumulating funds for the education of the poor. Wu Hsien's contribution to Chinese education was never questioned until the Communist critics attacked the film. Wu's efforts for the kind of education prevalent at the time according to the Communist critics, only strengthened the feudal order and arrested the advance of progress; rather than serving as an "antidote" of the Manchu ruling order, the critics said, Wu should have joined the revolutionaries.

546 art and a product of anti-historical and anti-popular ideology.⁷ Party organs in all parts of China where "Wu Hsün Chuan" had been shown used the film as a target for ideological propaganda. The ideology of the film was also discussed at the third session of the first National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which met from October 23 to November 1, 1951. Members of the All-China Federation of the Literary and Art Circles began to echo the view of the Central Committee of the Party and confessed that, while they had made definite progress in the past two years, nevertheless they always fell behind the development of Chinese society. This confession led the writers to "plunge" into study in an effort to "remold their ideology and to sharpen their critical senses."

538 This conflict between critical and creative forces also manifests itself in the bulk of the incongruous writings of the literary critics in Communist China. The critics has ready an abundance of clichés, jargon, and theories of socialist realism, but they are clearly ill-digested and are used with little discrimination or literary skill. Quotations from Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Gorky, Zhadanov are frequent but are

7. Current Background, Hong Kong, Amercian Consulate General, No. 113, Sept. 1, 1951.

- 58 not integrated into the theme of the text. Even Communist critics have noted that many quotations from orthodox Marxist texts are either irrelevant or superfluous.⁸ This excessive verbalism at the expense of content makes literary criticism irreconcilable with the alleged theory of its essentially didactic function. Much criticism is lukewarm and stereotyped, written by writers who are called upon by the Communists to undertake the task of attacking their fellow writers. In this case, what is criticized is invariably the "petty bourgeois standpoint." The exception to the rule is Mao Tse-tung himself, who, from his position of absolute authority, can write criticism which is non-imitative, forceful, and pointed, even by the standards of the free world. Top Communists, like Liu Shao-ch'i, for example, who seem to be more confident in translating Marxism into practice, do not quote from orthodox texts as often or use as many clichés as the lesser Communists.

Since 1949, Chinese Communist literature appears to have concentrated on a number of well-defined themes. It has been most concerned with the individual under the Communist system and the problem confronting him. These have included the social confusion of the New Democratic Period, the doubts of the intellectuals,

8. Shen Chu-chung, "The Popularization of Theoretical Criticism of Literature and Art," People's Literature, No. 9, July 1, 1950, pp. 27-28.

- 538 the "criminal activities of the bourgeois merchants, and the lackeys of the imperialists," the rise of the industrial hero, the struggle against the "enemy of the people," and the appearance of human types based on the newly created Communist "tradition." Even the "return to history" is oriented for the solution of certain present-day problems.⁹ Patriotism,
-

9. Writers are told to find evidence in history of the excellent qualities of the Chinese people, and to appreciate and to learn the beautiful styles in Chinese literary heritage. For instance, the poet Li Po (A.D. 701-762) who was an incorrigible individualist, can now be safely described as a "great patriot," for Li Po could not have written such beautiful verses about the magnificent rivers and mountains of his fatherland had he not been very patriotic." His many lyric poems which sang praises of the bright moon are now interpreted to mean his longing for a "cleaner" world, and therefore indicate his personal integrity; his mild protests against the conditions of his time are now interpreted as signs of his progressive spirit. Wang Yao, Li Po, Shanghai, Jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1955. Ch'u Yüan, the poet-statesman of the Kingdom of Ch'u in the Chan-kuo period (481-221 B.C.), is lauded for his "patriotism and sympathy for the common people." Kuo Mo-jo, "A Brief Account on Ch'u Yüan," People's Literature, No. 44, 1953. Emperors like Han

538 aestheticism, and naturalism are all good literary themes, provided they are imbued with the spirit of "socialist realism," which is belief in the inevitability of the development of socialism.

Since 1949 China's best writers have not produced any first-rate work. If there happen to be interesting writings that suit the taste of the reader, they do not fit into the theoretical scheme of the Party. Hsiao Yen-mu's short story "Between Us, Husband and Wife," for instance, was criticized as "employing the

Kao-tsu and T'ang T'ai-tsung, who increased the national territory and the prestige of the Chinese people, are now praised as heroic. This salvaging of historical characters and literature for Communist posterity could be a sign of a felt need. There are reports that since the Party came to the cities it has been neglecting to supply enough reading material for the people in the old Liberated Areas, and the people have gone back to the old novels. In order that these people may not be "poisoned" by the "feudalistic ideas" in the old novels, the re-interpretation of the characters in old novels according to dialectical materialism seems far more necessary than the writing of novels of comparable stature.

- 538 intellectual's viewpoint and taste to distort the image of the working masses and to vulgarize things political."

Some writers are unable to find publishers for their work, not because the work^{is} counter-revolutionary but because its theme is considered untimely. In 1952, Miao Yen-hsiu was advised not to publish his Miao-shan Feng-kuang, a long poem about freedom of love and marriage in Miao communities, because the Communists did not think a celebration of the equality of the sexes useful to the Communist revolution at that time.

Romantic novels of love and sophisticated novels of human relationships are not published. When love does come into the scene, it is shown as subsidiary to other, more "worthy" and "unselfish" problems (i.e., problems social and political).

Although the writer may desire to let human relationships play a decisive part in the development of his material, there is a tendency to utilize abstract characters rather than vivid personalities. Most of the writers who choose to deal with the exposure of corruption and the excesses and tyranny of established institutions are more adept at portraying "negative" personalities than creating "positive" personalities in keeping with the Communists' view of the "heroes" of the new regime. This is true,

538 despite the fact that Communist leaders have repeatedly told the writers "to give the most important position in the plot to the affirmative man," and that "in no case should evil be vividly presented, lest virtue remain an abstraction," for it is now the writers' task to describe the bright possibilities of life under Communist leadership.

The recent development of literature in China seems to parallel that of Russia and praise of industrial and agricultural heroes follows the pattern of Soviet literature. The influence of the war in Korea upon literature in China is comparable to the influence of World War II upon Russian literature. Now that we hear of the "thaw" in Russian literature,¹⁰ can we anticipate a similar development in China? Hu Feng's attempt to liberate literature from the shackle of politics,¹¹ although it ended in failure and personal disgrace, indicates, nevertheless, conscious recognition by a group of writers of the freedom necessary for the creation of works of art.¹² Only general discussion of minor ways to improve literature has been undertaken

10. Walter Z. Laqueur, "Russia in Flux, I. The 'Thaw' and After," Encounter, London, Oct. 1955, p. 35.

11. Hu Feng is a well-known Communist writer and was the protégé of the Communists' "literary saint" Lu Hsün.

12. Laqueur, op. cit., p. 35.

- 538 by leading authors like Mao Tun and Ai Ch'ing, and all discussions are prefaced by fervent dedications to the Marxist-Leninist world outlook. While the parallel we draw of the development of literature in the two countries may aid in the understanding of certain similarities, the parallel is not complete. If we compare the contents of the first six issues of People's Literature (Oct. 1949 to April 1950) with the six issues published in the first six months of 1955, we find a noticeable change: the percentage of creative writing by Chinese has increased, and the percentage of works translated from the Russian has decreased. Among the translated works, the percentage from Soviet Russia is smaller than it was, and there is now a sampling of literature from non-Communist sources, including, surprisingly enough, the tales of Hans Christian Andersen.

II. THE GENRES OF LITERATURE

A. Translations from Russian Literature

638
177

Translations from Russian literature are included in this section because of the influence they have had on Chinese intellectuals.

According to a survey made in 1937 in twenty-one Chinese universities and eight high schools, foreign literature, particularly Russian, English, and American, had an important place in the intellectual life of contemporary

- 638 youth in China. Gorky was mentioned oftener
177 than any other foreign author. Other favored
Russian authors included Tolstoy and Turgen-
iev.¹³ This popularity of Russian literature
seems remarkable in view of the fact that
between 1927 and 1949 there were no Russian
schools in China and almost no Russian was
taught. Of course many works of Russian
literature were translated into Chinese.

The success of Russian literature in China stems from the appreciation of the problems confronting Russian and Chinese society: the conflict of generations, new sexual ethics, the struggle for sexual equality, the struggle between the doctrine of "non-resistance" and a revolutionary attitude toward life. Sympathy with the Russian revolution has also played a part.¹⁴

Translations of post-1917 Russian writings such as Krymov's Tanker Derbent (1939), Ostrovsky's How Steel was tempered (1937), Simonov's Days and Nights, a novel of Stalingrad, Shcholkhov's And Quiet Flows the Don, and Virgin

13. Olga Lang, Chinese Family and Society, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1946, pp. 276, 363-64.

14. Ibid., p. 276. O. Briere, Les tendances dominantes de la littérature Chinoise contemporaine, Bul. Univ. Aurore, Ser. III, Vol. IX, No. 35, July 1948, p. 251.

538 Soil Upturned, a novel about collective farming,
197 and Fadeyev's The Young Guard (1945) were
read by secondary school and college students.
These novels encouraged young intellectuals
with a yearning for a "positive" life of action
no less heroic, revolutionary, and romantic
than that experienced by the heroes about which
they read. These novels had an obvious in-
fluence on the radical movement among the
students who defied the Kuomintang regime.

Today, Bassov, hero of Krymov's
Tanker Derbent, and Korchagin, hero of
Ostrovsky's How Steel was Tempered, are
more familiar to the students than many of the
characters in novels written by Chinese
authors, most probably because the Chinese
novels are poor imitations of Russian origin-
als. Mayakovsky's poem "Lenin" is acclaimed
by the Chinese Communists as a model of
socialist realism, and Michael Prishvin's
nature poetry is popular. Chinese translations
of Ehrenburg's Storm and Nikolayava's
Harvest are best-sellers.¹⁵

15. "'Liberating' the Creative Impulse
in China," The Time Literary Supplement,
August 5, 1955, xlii. For the Chinese
Communists' own estimation of the influence
of Soviet literature on Chinese writing, see
Pa Jen, Look at the Soviet People through
Soviet Literature, Peking, Chung-kuo ch'ing-
nien ch'u-pan-she, 1955.

538 Since the establishment of the Central
177 People's Government, delegations of Russian
877 authors have visited Peking and other important cities of China. Russian is now taught in Chinese schools as the foreign language. Under the Communist regime, the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association, which has branches throughout China, has contributed much in the promotion of popular appreciation of Russian culture.

B. Academic Writings

844 Academic writing under direction of the Chinese Communists seems to be concentrated upon the history of peasant rebellion during the last one hundred years, anthropological studies of the ethnic minorities in China, commentaries, political and philosophical, on texts by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, and Liu Shao-ch'i, and archeology and pre-historic Chinese society.

In the field of modern Chinese history, the Chinese Historical Society 16 is most comprehensive in its program of research. It has sponsored the compilation of a series of documents on modern Chinese history. To date, the published volumes of the series include

16. The society is now called the Institute of Chinese History, a division of the Academy of Sciences at Peking.

812 to short articles published in such journals as The New Reconstruction (Hsin Chien-she), explaining Communist terms and government policies. Fung (Feng) Yu-lan, the philosopher, has only published one article, "Mao Tse-tung's On Practice and Chinese Philosophy," since he made his confession. His article is an attempt to establish some continuity in Chinese philosophy in the past centuries, especially as it is concerned with the problem of knowledge and action, and to place the various revolutions in the same context. The article attempts to make Mao Tse-tung's ideology seem respectable, but it adds nothing to the development of philosophy. This state of affairs is necessarily the case since "truth" was declared in Marxian writings before 1949, and there is no room for new ideas except in commentaries on "orthodox views". Cadres and students must study Party and government documents in the light of Marxian texts. By attacking "wrong" views, "correct" dialectic materialist views are vindicated. The recent mass attack on Hu Shih's "bourgeois" philosophy illustrates this point.¹⁸

C. Fiction

538 North China came under Communist control earlier than other regions of China proper. This region was therefore the first to face

18. Criticism on Hu Shih's Ideology (3 vols.) Peking, San-lien shu-tien, 1955.

538 problems of industrial recovery, agricultural revival, the land reform, and the liquidation of anti-Communist forces. Since Communist literature is intended to describe the solution of these problems, stories and novels which dealt with these aspects were first produced in North China; and it is in this sense they are original and unique. Among the literature dealing with the War of Resistance against Japan, stories of the "heroic deeds" of the 8th Route Army in North China have eclipsed other treatments of anti-Japanese activities in other parts of China.

People all over China read Hsin Erh-nü Ying-hsiung-chuan [The Biography of a New Hero and Heroine], a best-seller by Yüan Ching and K'ung Chüeh. It is a 200,000-word account of the repulse of the Japanese invaders in North China, written in the style of traditional Chinese novels;¹⁹ and Ting Ling's The Sun Shines on the Sang-ch'ien (Sang-kan) River, a novel about the struggle of the people in North

19. The first edition of 10,000 copies was sold out in twenty days, 80 per cent being sold in North China. Although pleased with its success, the Communists have lamented the fact that the Chinese people are still too fond of the traditional "feudalistic" novels, that a novel of new ideas and new people could be successful only when dressed in traditional forms.

538 China during the 1946-1948 land reform, which won the Stalin prize, is equally popular. Liu Pai-yü's Lights Ahead, which describes the crossing of the Yangtze River by General Liu Po-ch'eng's army during the "liberation war" against the Kuomintang, is well-known in North China.

D. Peotry

Although Mao Tse-tung himself has composed poems in the classical style, the "new poetry" which is written in pai-hua (vernacular) is in vogue in North China today as in other parts of China.

Wen I-to, Kuo Mo-jo, and Hsü Chih-mo, who wrote pai-hua poetry, are still talked of. The publication of Wen's collected poems, Still Water, was an important literary event in 1929. Hsü experimented with new forms, including those found in Western poetry. He was less concerned with the theory and art of versification than Wen was. Wen's book, the Forms and Rules of Poetry (1926) which lists musical artistic, and architectural skills as the necessary elements of good poetry, is a unique contribution to pai-hua poetry. His study of painting in the United States caused him to stress the beauty of forms in his poetry.

Kuo Mo-jo's poetry had energy and imagination, but no discipline and restraint; and had been likened to water running from a broken

538dam, rushing everywhere. In the 1920's, when Kuo was the leader of the Creative Society, he advocated "art for art's sake." He was the first to introduce untranslated Western words and phrases into pai-hua poetry to enhance the beauty of the metrical patterns of the stanzas. Although Kuo is not productive nowadays, and his poems are not popular today, his present prestige as a "literary personage" is based on his past achievement; and his present political position as a cultural leader in the Communist regime in turn encourages the sale of his poems. He is the only one of the three still living. Being now wholly dedicated to the Communist cause, although not a Party member, he is comparable to Simonov of Russia, for Kuo, like Simonov, spends a good deal of his time heading cultural delegations to other countries and entertaining foreign cultural delegations to China.

Ai Ch'ing and T'ien Chien are established Communist poets. Ai writes prose poems and T'ien writes extremely short verses. The average Chinese reader is apt to appreciate Ai more than T'ien, especially when Ai writes of everyday things familiar to the reader and T'ien draws his inspiration from a vision of the new world which is less comprehensible to the average reader.

Mao Fan-t'o and Li Chi are often spoken of together. Ma's poems are modeled upon

- 532 popular rhymes. Li Chi's poems are modeled after Shun-t'ien-yu, a folk-song pattern popular in Shansi and Suiyuan during the war against Japan.

All the poets mentioned above are known nationally. Their styles are imitated by lesser known poets. Li Chi's poem Wang Kuei and Li Hsiang-hsiang, which has a North China flavor, seems to be the most popular poem produced under the Communist regime.

E. Popular Rhymes and Folk Songs

- 532 Folk songs in North China are freer in
533 form than those in South and East China. The popular rhymes, which have been preserved orally for generations, are especially neat and clever in expression.

The Chinese Communists have always been active in fostering folk songs and popular rhymes which welcome or accept the new political order. The best example is "Tung-fang Hung" ["All Red the East"], a folk song originating in Shensi, and now well-known in North China, which likens Mao Tse-tung to the sun rising in the east. Some of the newer folk songs fostered by the Communists praise construction and eulogize the "new people" under the present regime.

- 533 Some of the older folk songs are now being rearranged so that the old forms may accom-

776
538



K'UEI HSING, GOD OF LITERATURE

[p. 4(n)]

YANG KE AND OTHER RECREATION

333

thing that she has never done or to enjoy anything she has never enjoyed. As a result a daughter-in-law is generally depicted as hoping that her mother-in-law will die very soon so that she may be mistress of the house. And she wants to treat her daughter-in-law in the same way that she has been treated.

When spirits take on human form and carry on work and romance, when a wife browbeats her husband and forces him to kneel with a brick or a lamp on his head as punishment for gambling, when a donkey driver and his woman passenger discuss affairs, the actors have an opportunity to insert plenty of slap-stick humor and broad jokes.

The miscellaneous group of yang ke included stories about Ting Hsien and stories borrowed from the regular Chinese stage.

The old people said that in the old days the yang ke were much more refined than they were when we studied them, that during the preceding 25 years the tunes, words, and acting had gradually become rougher and more boisterous and more and more popular. In fact, the year before our study the District Bureau of Education tried to suppress the plays on the grounds that they were a social and moral menace, but it could not enforce its prohibition.

Our investigators reported that while there was some vulgarity and considerable sex in the yang ke it was the sort to tickle the crowd and the plays were not, in their opinion, a harmful influence. The opposition to the plays apparently came from the old-fashioned people and the traditional attitudes of the countryside, where even a man and a woman shaking hands was considered to have a sex implication and where it was unheard of for a father to kiss his daughter in public.

The yang ke were very popular and had a large place in the recreational life of Ting Hsien. They were a people's literature, developed by local groups. Traditional stories had been subject to local editing and changes. They were simple enough for all to understand, but with literary quality. They pictured life in the country or life as the country people would like to have it. Life as depicted on the stage represented high society for many of the villagers. Love making on the stage was certainly an emotional release for the crowd.

The yang ke tunes were the popular music of the countryside. They were learned by young and old. We often heard them being sung at night by a belated villager walking through the fields. He would be

STUDY OF THREE PEKING GUILDS

103

Mr. S. D. Gamble. This meeting must not be taken as typical of guild meetings in the city of Peking. The organization and regulations of the Blind Guild are, according to our study, the most complicated and detailed of any guild in the city. The general outline, however, shows the character of the business transacted at one of these annual meetings.

The Gild of the Blind, who make a business of singing, story telling and entertaining, holds its meetings on the 2nd of the 3rd month and the 8th of the 9th month, celebrating the Chinese festivals of the 3rd of the 3rd moon and the 9th of the 9th moon, as the meeting lasts until 5 o'clock the next morning. It was our good fortune to be given the privilege of attending one of these meetings. As the gild has no gild hall, it borrows the *Ching Chung Miao*, a temple in the South City, outside of Hatamen, and there, all day long, a constant stream of blind men was coming and going. They were greeting their friends, discussing politics and the conditions of business, and enjoying the tea and cakes that had been provided; and it was a strange sight to see so many blind people together, each with his long bamboo cane, tapping, tapping, tapping, as they moved around the hall. They were constantly calling back and forth across the hall as the men tried to locate their friends; and, when a group wanted to move from one part of the hall to another, they formed a line, each with his hand on the shoulder of the man in front of him, and were led by a man who still had a little vision and so could avoid chairs and tables. A very few women came to the meeting; they visited among themselves or listened to the business being transacted, but did not mingle with the men.

In the evening the executive council of forty-eight met to conduct the business of the gild. They gathered around a row of tables arranged in the shape of a tortoise shell. The twenty-four men on each side of the table all had different titles and duties as follows.

467*
732[533
538]

*467

Chinese universe, Heaven, Earth, and Man. The members of this guild are composed of blind singers and blind fortune-tellers.

Cooks—*Chu Hang* (Cooks Guild).

Composed of cooks who prepare food in Chinese style.

Kitchen Coolies—*Yu Tso* (Oil or Oily Workers).

The title is evidently meant to reflect the usual greasy appearance of these cooks' assistants. There are two grades in this work: The first is composed of the more skilled workers who assist the cook in passing dishes from the stove to the waiters; the second group is generally known as *tiao pen*, or "unskilled (literally "stupid") carriers." The term carriers here means to carry on poles over the shoulders. The principal work of these coolies is to carry the provisions which the cook has bought at the store or market to the restaurant or hotel where the food is to be prepared.

Porters—*Kung Yi Chang Shan Cha Yeh Sheng Hui* (The Enduring Righteous Public Welfare Holy Tea Leaves Association).

The origin of this long and complicated name is explained in our detailed discussion of this guild.¹ The guild is composed of a group of porters who carry boxes, trunks, baggage, or other objects on the shoulders.

*467
538

Story Tellers—*Ping Shu Yen Chiu She* (Story Tellers Discussion and Study Association).

The professional story tellers who entertain in theaters, tea houses, markets or temple festivals are members of this guild.

*467

Waiters—*Cha Hang* (Tea Guild).

Waiters who serve Chinese-style food. Their duties are setting the table, serving guests and pouring tea.

¹ Cf. p. 90.